

EDITORIAL

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Introduction: Sound – Screen – Research

The dynamic dance of sound and image in the cinematic landscape continually prompts thoughtful analysis and reflection. Michel Chion's 2019 insight, "You do not see the same thing when you hear, and you do not hear the same thing when you see," captures a nuanced truth. For those steeped in the world of sound studies, this observation seems almost self-evident, underscoring the balanced role each sense plays in our cinematic experiences. Yet, it's worth noting that only some people share this perspective. Sound has a subtle way of entering our awareness, often operating in the shadows of our consciousness. Its influence, though sometimes unnoticed, is deeply powerful—acting as the invisible puppeteer of our emotional responses and steering our interpretation of stories.

This underappreciation of the influential role of sound has led many to consider sound practitioners as mere technicians rather than creative artists, and their significant contributions are just a decoration of the image track. In the field of film studies, there is a noticeable uptrend in dialogues that prioritise the role of sound; however, these discussions still need to be more frequent when juxtaposed with the more prevalent discourses focusing on imagery. This disparity highlights potential growth and exploration within the academic community, encouraging a balanced and comprehensive understanding of visual and auditory elements in cinema.

The Sound and Screen conference at Nanyang Technological University sought to critically examine the intersection

between research, practice, and pedagogy in sound for visual media. It brought practitioners and researchers from Asia, North America, and Europe together to Singapore, supported by CILECT, Nanyang Technological University and the U.S. Embassy in Singapore. A diverse range of paper presentations explored sound and its implications across various domains, ranging from theoretical foundations to practical applications.

This special edition conjures an in-depth account of the realms where voices, devoid of the human form and sounds, absent of visible origins, mould our perceptions, emotions, and conceptual understandings of the self and the other, traversing through traditional cinema to avant-garde post-cinematic landscapes.

Marc Gloede's exploration hinges upon the complex interplay of auditory and visual aspects in cinema, where disembodied voices create not only immersive experiences but also birth 'fantasmatic bodies'. This journey, elucidated through the prism of von Trier's film "Europa", peels back layers of auditory experiences in both cinematic and post-cinematic environments, scrutinising how voices sculpt, and indeed become, our psychological and emotional worlds, concurrently anchoring and unhinging our perceptive reality.

Roger Crittenden, on the other hand, illuminates the intricate dance between film and consciousness representation, drawing attention to the delicate yet potent tool that is the voice-over, manoeuvring through its varied applications across diverse cinematic landscapes. This exploration is enriched by instances from directors such as Jean Renoir and Billy Wilder,

uncovering the nuances and strategic considerations embedded in revealing internal states and perspectives through the disembodied voice.

Jorge Lensing surveys the role of sound design beyond cinema and into new and emerging realms. Sound is central in creating immersive experiences, from radio plays to dome projections. His exploration shines a light on the role of the Creative Audio Director: an artist who artfully melds artistic, psychological, and technical expertise, thereby redefining and elevating the role of sound creatives.

Kerstin Stutterheim offers a welcome and much-needed examination of sound in dramaturgy for documentary film. She artfully discusses the role of dramaturgy in the emotional, structural, and aesthetic shaping of documentary filmmaking, amplifying its duality as both a practice and an academic discipline while probing its significant and often overlooked element - sound design. Through a meticulous examination of works like 'The End of Time', Stutterheim underscores sound not merely as an aesthetic layer but as a potent narratorial entity, sculpting and guiding emotional and aesthetic audience responses.

Ben Slater's thought-provoking introspection into the realm of screenwriting sheds light on the often-underexplored narrative potency of sound, excavating its historical trajectory and contemporary applicability within scripts. Analysing exemplary "sound-conscious" screenplays like "The Conversation" and "A Quiet Place", Slater disentangles the complexity surrounding sound integration in screenwriting practices and

pedagogy, advocating for a future where writers instinctively acknowledge and adeptly wield sound as a pivotal narrative mechanism.

Lastly, with Vytis Puronas and *Sonic Alchemist*, we enter a domain where artificial intelligence (AI) does not merely mimic or substitute human input but synergises with human creativity in the realm of film sound design. He presents a fascinating window into the creative sound design process and the critical role of “accidents”, with reflections on the roles of randomness and intentional creation in artistic processes. *Sonic Alchemist*, an AI tool of his creation, is designed to facilitate new ways of approaching sound design and generating inspired and unexpected sound and image combinations. Fashioned to be a creative collaborator, the tool, inspires fresh insights and solutions and navigates the fine line between structured predictability and chaotic creativity.

In this edition, our contributors, through varied yet interlinked explorations, unveil the myriad ways in which sound and voices—seen or unseen, acknowledged or unnoticed—become interwoven with our cinematic and auditory experiences, inviting the reader into a rich, complex world where the seen and the heard converge to create the wholly experienced. We hope you find meaning in these thought-provoking articles as we manoeuvre through the multifaceted universe of sound and cinema.